

JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

MR. AUSTIN CARR

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JOLIET JUNIOR COLLEGE
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
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INTERVIEWEE: Mr. Austin Carr

INTERVIEWER: John Carr

INTERVIEWER: This is an interview with Mr. Austin Carr by John Carr for the Joliet Junior College Oral History Project recorded in Mr. Austin Carr's home at 8:00 p.m. on October 15, 1976.

J. CARR: Okay, Grandpa, let's start with when you were born.

A. CARR: June 25, 1895.

J. CARR: And where were you born at?

A. CARR: Morris.

J. CARR: Morris, Illinois? Do you remember where at in Morris?

A. CARR: On Illinois Avenue.

J. CARR: What part of town is that in?

A. CARR: That's Wix's, going east.

J. CARR: On the east side of town then. And how about your parents -- do you remember where they came from?

A. CARR: I think my dad came from Iowa. I think he was born out there; I ain't sure. My mother was born right here.

J. CARR: Your mother was born here on the farm?

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: Do you remember what they did?

A. CARR: They were farmers.

J. CARR: Your dad and your mom were both farmers?

A. CARR: Well, my dad run a blacksmith shop for years in Morris and he came out here and started to farm.

J. CARR: Do you remember anything about your parents' education?

A. CARR: I don't know where my dad went to school; my mother went to college in Morris?

J. CARR: Your mother went to college in Morris? Where at in Morris?

A. CARR: Where the Davis Funeral Home is now.

J. CARR: Oh, there used to be a college down there where the funeral home is!

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: What kind of a college was that?

A. CARR: I don't know; I can't remember that far back.

J. CARR: That's a little too far back to go, isn't it?

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: Do you remember how your parents happened to come out here to the farm and start farming?

A. CARR: No. My mother was born here, and she inherited the farm, I

guess. They lived south of Morris on a farm they owned there, and they traded that to my uncle for this farm and moved out here.

J. CARR: So the farm was more or less in the family. And when it came time for them to take over the farm, they came out here?

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: How about your family -- how many brothers and sisters did you have?

A. CARR: I had two brothers and that's all.

J. CARR: Just two brothers -- what were their names?

A. CARR: Frank Wal, and Joseph Craig.

J. CARR: Frank Wal and Joseph Craig. How long did they stay at the farm after your family moved out there?

A. CARR: Well, my brother farmed and had a house over in the field, and it burnt down. Then he moved over by Minooka. My brother moved -- my folks bought the place down by Morris and he moved down there with them.

J. CARR: That was a . . .

A. CARR: Frank.

J. CARR: Uncle Frank had the house up here in the field . . .

A. CARR: Yes, and it burnt down.

J. CARR: And then it was Uncle Craig that moved to Morris?

A. CARR: He moved down there with them and when my folks died, he took that place over.

J. CARR: Oh, your folks moved to town?

A. CARR: North of town. There was a building in there where that furniture store is now.

J. CARR: Where Spezio and Nelson's is now?

A. CARR: Yes. They owned ten acres in there. There's a gas station there now; they had a gas station, too.

J. CARR: How did your folks come to own that land -- do you know how they came to move down there?

A. CARR: They bought it.

J. CARR: Oh, they bought that land?

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: When you came out here to White Willow, what was out here?

A. CARR: I was only two years old, so how do I know!

J. CARR: You don't remember?

A. CARR: No. There was this place here, the old buildings, and there was some buildings over in the field where that house was burnt down.

J. CARR: Was the store and the school here when you came here?

A. CARR: I don't know.

J. CARR: How about some of the neighbors around here -- do you remember some of the other people that lived around here?

A. CARR: There was Schufeldts, two families -- Norman Schufeldt and his family and John Schufeldt and his family. And there was a Peter Lassam that lived over here where Messerschmidt lives now.

J. CARR: Where Messerschmidt lives now? Did both the Schufeldts live over here across the road?

A. CARR: No. One lived here and the other lived where, what do you call that guy down there now, east of the store?

J. CARR: Beryl Bounos.

A. CARR: Yes, but Norm Schufeldt lived there and John lived here, and they traded farms.

J. CARR: One went down there and the other one came up here.

A. CARR: Yes, and the other one came up here; I can remember that.

J. CARR: Do you have any relatives living in this area now?

A. CARR: Not that I know of.

J. CARR: They're all gone -- all your relatives?

A. CARR: Around here they are.

J. CARR: Okay, how about when you were growing up -- where did you go to school at?

A. CARR: There was school on the corner where that house is now.

J. CARR: What was the name of the school?

A. CARR: White Willow School.

J. CARR: Do you remember how that school came into being?

A. CARR: No. It was there for as far back as I can remember.

J. CARR: You don't remember anything about who bought the land for it or anything?

A. CARR: Well, it's in that stuff over there. Your mother can tell you.

J. CARR: It's in Joseph Whitney's ledger?

A. CARR: I think so. Somebody said him and somebody else bought the acre of land and gave it to the school.

J. CARR: Joseph Whitney and this other man bought that land over there.

A. CARR: Gave it to the school to build on. That was my grandfather, Joseph Whitney.

J. CARR: What kind of classes did they have over there?

A. CARR: Up to eighth grade.

J. CARR: Up to eighth grade. Did they -- that was just one room over there?

A. CARR: That's all.

J. CARR: How many teachers did they have for that?

A. CARR: One.

J. CARR: Just one teacher for all eight grades.

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: Did the teacher teach the whole school at one time or did she split it up and take a few classes?

A. CARR: They had so many classes a day.

J. CARR: What do you mean? Did she teach first or second grade one day and . . .?

A. CARR: No. They used to combine a couple of grades -- first and second, and maybe third and fourth.

J. CARR: Where did they get the teachers to teach over there?

A. CARR: Well, they had three directors, and they applied for a job, and the directors hired the one they wanted.

J. CARR: Do you remember some of the teachers who taught over there?

A. CARR: I can't remember the names.

J. CARR: Were there any of your relatives taught over there at any time?

A. CARR: Not that I know of.

J. CARR: Did they have indoor bathrooms or anything over there?

A. CARR: No.

J. CARR: What did -- where did they have the washrooms at?

A. CARR: Didn't have any washrooms.

J. CARR: What did they have?

A. CARR: Well, they might of had a wash basin and get some water out of the pump if they had to wash or anything.

J. CARR: Did the kids have to go -- did they have outhouses then?

A. CARR: They had to go outside, even if it was cold.

J. CARR: They didn't take very long when it was cold. Kind of hurried up and got out. Did all the kids go to school at -- I mean, did all the boys and girls, did they all go at one time?

A. CARR: Yes. Sometimes the older boys would just go in the winter and they stayed home and helped farm in the summertime.

J. CARR: Did they teach school like they do today, where they go in the fall and the winter and then they finish up in the spring and they're home in the summer?

A. CARR: Yes. They had summer vacation -- nine months school and three months vacation.

J. CARR: Well, then, when the weather got good for farming, then some of the older boys stayed home?

A. CARR: They had to stay home and help their folks farm.

J. CARR: They didn't have laws then like they do now where they all have to go to school?

A. CARR: No.

J. CARR: Did they have any high schools or anything around here then?

A. CARR: Lisbon had a high school.

J. CARR: Oh, they had a high school over at Lisbon!

A. CARR: Yes, for a three-year term or something like that -- two or three.

J. CARR: Did you go over there to high school?

A. CARR: I went to Lisbon for two years.

J. CARR: Two years. Where was the high school at over there?

A. CARR: Well, there is a big building up there -- oh, what do they call those truckers -- they use it for a truck bar.

J. CARR: I think it's O'Briens.

A. CARR: No. Thompson's.

J. CARR: Thompson's?

A. CARR: Yes, they use that school now for a truck place.

J. CARR: That's where a truck bar is over there now.

A. CARR: Yes, it's on the corner.

J. CARR: Was that more or less a continuation of grade school over there?

A. CARR: Well, the grade school and the high school was in the same building. The grade school was downstairs for about five or six grades and seventh and eighth grades and the high school was upstairs.

J. CARR: Did they teach harder classes over there in the high school -- things that they didn't teach in grade school?

A. CARR: They had Latin, and Algebra, and Geometry, and that kind of stuff.

J. CARR: Did you take any of those kinds of classes?

A. CARR: Yes. I took Algebra and Geometry, Geology, and a few other things; I can't remember all of them.

J. CARR: Well, I always wondered about this. You're so sharp in math, and you're so fast with numbers. I just kind of wondered if you had anything like that. Did they have any libraries or anything for the kids to do their school work around here?

A. CARR: They had some books there, but it wasn't -- you could go and get a book and look at it, but that's all.

J. CARR: Did they have any libraries like they do now where you can go to town and they have a big library and all kinds of books?

A. CARR: No, no, not out in the country towns they didn't.

J. CARR: Did they have any -- I know my mother saw mentioned in Joseph Whitney's journal that some of the homes had libraries of their own.

A. CARR: I don't know.

J. CARR: Let me talk a little bit about farming now. What kind of crops did they plant when you were growing up?

A. CARR: Corn and oats, mostly -- some wheat.

J. CARR: A little bit of wheat. How did they plant the crops back then?

A. CARR: They planted the corn with a corn-planter, the same way they do now. They had a special seeder for oats and wheat.

J. CARR: Did they have a --

A. CARR: They had a drill for wheat mostly.

J. CARR: Oh, they drilled wheat?

A. CARR: Drilled it in.

J. CARR: Like you mentioned a corn-planter -- how were they different from the corn-planters like we have today?

A. CARR: Well, the only difference was that it was mostly two-row then.

J. CARR: They were two-row? They weren't as automatic as the planters that we have today, were they?

A. CARR: You used a wire, with buttons on them, and you checked every so often and the wire went through a fork?

J. CARR: How did the wire work?

A. CARR: I told you it had buttons on the wire and it went through a fork like that, and every time it would hit, it clicked; it would open and set the corn in the ground.

J. CARR: Was this wire on a spool?

A. CARR: The wire was stretched across the field; there was a stake on

each end.

J. CARR: Oh, there was a wire and you stretched wires across the field.

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: When this yoke on the planter hit the hole in the wire, it made . . .

A CARR : When you got to the end, you changed the wire over behind the planter again. You moved it, turned around, and went back to the other end and did the same thing.

J.CARR: You mean this wire was stretched out on the ground and you had to follow over the wire?

A. CARR: The wire run along side of the planter. You drove along side of the wire.

J. CARR: That must of been quite a bit of work, you had to get off every time you moved that wire over.

A. CARR: We didn't know any different.

J. CARR: Were the fields as long then as they are now?

A. CARR: Just the same.

J. CARR: How did they control the length between the rows?

A. CARR: They had a gauge on the planter and made a mark and you would turn around, straddle that gauge, and drive back over it. It spaced off just the right distance.

J. CARR: Did they have to use horses? They didn't have any tractors or anything then, did they?

A. CARR: No. When I first planted, we used horses.

J. CARR: Used horses. And then you couldn't do as much then with horses as you did . . .

A. CARR: Twenty acres is a big day's work.

J. CARR: That was quite a bit then.

A. CARR: It was a big day! You didn't get that very often.

J. CARR: How many horses and other livestock did they have on the farm?

A. CARR: Oh, we usually had -- for about 160 acres, eight horses, and you had some milk cows. Some people had pigs, some of them had chickens with their own eggs. The surplus eggs they'd sell to the store over here.

J. CARR: You were going to say something about horses there before I interrupted you -- about how many horses you had.

A. CARR: I said we had about eight.

J. CARR: You couldn't take the horses out then and run them all day like you do with the tractors now, could you?

A. CARR: Well, you fed them in the morning and you harnessed them and went to the field and you'd come home at noon and feed them again, go back out after one o'clock and work until six o'clock and come in

and feed them again.

J. CARR: Did you have to stop and rest them every now and then?

A. CARR: Yes, yes. You had to do that; you couldn't go steady.

J. CARR: You said you had chickens. Did you have chickens here on the farm?

A. CARR: What?

J. CARR: Did they raise chickens here on this farm?

A. CARR: Yes -- hatched them with hens sitting on the eggs.

J. CARR: Did you have a hatching business here at one time?

A. CARR: Yes. I used to hatch some chickens for neighbors -- incubators -- we used then.

J. CARR: Where did you keep the baby chicks?

A. CARR: You see that brooder-house out there? You had houses like that to raise them in when you had maybe three to four hundred at a time. You had a brooder-stove fired by oil.

J. CARR: That was to keep the chicks warm. I remember when I was little, you used to have a dome you had to cover them up with at night. Was that to keep them warm at night?

A. CARR: They went under that dome. It was there all day long. That's where the heat was.

J. CARR: The heat was under that, so they were in there to keep warm?

A. CARR: I ain't sure if there ain't one in the garage yet -- an electric one.

J. CARR: I think it's hanging up there on top of the rack in the garage. How did they harvest the crops back then when they were ready to harvest?

A. CARR: Well -- corn you went out and husked it by hand, one ear at a time -- threw it in the wagon and brought it in -- and in the olden days they shoveled it off with a scoop.

J. CARR: They shoveled it off the wagon with a scoop?

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: You mean they threw it. . . Did they have big corn cribs then like they do today?

A. CARR: They had corn cribs, but not big ones -- not so high like they are now.

J. CARR: The wagons must have been quite. . .

A. CARR: They had an end gate, you'd let it down, a shoveling board they called it. That's so they could start shoveling to load, I mean unload it.

J. CARR: Then the men had to throw the ears of corn into the crib by hand with shovels?

A. CARR: With a scoop. Then they got elevators. Then we raised the wagon up and run it out the back end and into the elevator.

J. CARR: Oh, you elevated it up, and it was all done by machine then?

A. CARR: The elevators went on the outside upon the roof -- outside in those days.

J. CARR: Oh, they went outside the crib?

A. CARR : Yes. They didn't have cup elevators like they've got now.

J. CARR: Oh, they didn't have inside elevators like you have here now?

A. CARR: No, not unless they run it up the inside on an angle, up through the alleyway.

J. CARR: Did they have to rebuild the cribs when they started to use the elevators?

A. CARR: Well, usually when they built a new crib, they built a much bigger crib, and you had to have an elevator cause you couldn't get the corn up that high.

J. CARR: I mean, is that when they came out with elevators -- that's when they started to build bigger cribs then?

A. CARR: I guess so.

J. CARR: How about the oats and the wheat -- how did they harvest them?

A. CARR: Well, we went out with a binder and made bundles. We went along and picked them up and made shocks, what they called them -- little round, and usually there were eleven bundles in a shock. And we had a threshing machine. You went out and a man pitched the bundles on the hayrack. You brought them in (from the field) and run them through the threshing machine.

J. CARR: Was this threshing machine, was that kind of a neighborhood affair?

A. CARR: Well, yes. We usually had a company affair.

J. CARR: Did they go around when one farm was ready -- did they go to his farm?

A. CARR: Went from one farm to another, and you changed work with neighbors.

J. CARR: All the farmers in the community, they all got together and went to help one guy when he was ready to harvest?

A. CARR: Well, you sent so many men according to the size of your farm.

J. CARR: When did you start to run the farm by yourself?

A. CARR: Oh. . . about between 55 and 60 years ago.

J. CARR: That would be around 1925 then?

A. CARR: Before that. . . 1912.

J. CARR: Did you have to have hired help in order to get the work done?

A. CARR: No. . . done most of it myself in those days. Sometimes you would get a man through the busy time to help you.

J. CARR: During the fall harvest time?

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: And in the spring for planting time, then? You said you had

milk cows. Did you make a pretty big business out of milking cows?

A. CARR: Well, when I first started, we only kept enough cows to make our own cream and butter. Then in 1935 I went into the dairy business.

J. CARR: You started to . . .

A. CARR: Sold the milk.

J. CARR: Started to sell the milk then. Where did they keep the milk at?

A. CARR: We had that milkhouse over there and we put, had the water tank full. We pumped water through it -- cold water. Put the milk in cans. Then the milkman came every morning to pick it up and take it to the market.

J. CARR: How far away did they have to go to the market?

A. CARR: When they finished (picking it up), they would take it to Sandwich.

J. CARR: Sandwich, Illinois? Did they take the milk and the dairy products anywhere else besides Sandwich?

A. CARR: Oh, I used to sell milk to Orland Park, and to Joliet, and to Wilmington.

J. CARR: Oh, you sold all the way over to Wilmington, too?

A. CARR: They changed it around. We belonged to what they called The Pure Milk, and we sent the milk where they told us to send it.

J. CARR: Oh, you didn't have any control over where the milk went to?

A. CARR: No.

J. CARR: When you sold your crops, where did you sell them, who to?

A. CARR: Well, there was elevators in Minooka and Morris when I first started up. And then they built an elevator up at Central. They had a railroad run from Yorkville to Morris, and there was an elevator up there so we sold it up at Yorkville. I guess they ran out of money and they closed it down.

J. CARR: When they sold the corn to the elevator, was it sold by the ears?

A. CARR: Well, you could sell it by the ears, but most of us had a sheller come in and shell the corn, right out of the crib, and we hauled it to market. In the olden days, we hauled it in a team and wagon.

J. CARR: Oh, you took it by team and wagon then?

A. CARR: Yes. You could haul about sixty bushels on a load. And then the trucks came in.

J. CARR: When did the tractors start to come to the farms?

A. CARR: Oh, let's see -- 1917, I think was the first tractor we had here -- '16 or '17.

J. CARR: Around in there then, huh? What were tractors like back then?

A. CARR: The ones we had was two-cylinder outfits -- called a T-I-T-A-N, Titan.

J. CARR: Titan.

A. CARR: International make.

J. CARR: How did they differ from the tractors like we have today?

A. CARR: Well, they were more clumsy, bigger.

J. CARR: Bigger.

A. CARR: Didn't have as much power.

J. CARR: They didn't have rubber tires then, either, did they?

A. CARR: No, not to start with.

J. CARR: Did they just have big tires. . .

A. CARR: Steel wheels and steel lugs on them.

J. CARR: Could you use these tractors in the field like they do today with the new tractors? I mean could you cultivate the crops with them?

A. CARR: Well, you couldn't cultivate the crops with the first one I had, but the next one, the second one you could. You had to get what they call a row-crop to cultivate the corn.

J. CARR: Did the wheels of the early tractors fit down between the rows?

A. CARR: You didn't take the early tractors out in the rows. All you done was plow and disk with them.

J. CARR: I see.

A. CARR: Get the ground ready, and you planted the stuff with horses.

J. CARR: Oh, they still used horses even when the tractors started to come?

A. CARR: Oh, yes. The tractors mostly were to plow with when they first came out.

J. CARR: Oh, they more or less used the tractors for the heavy duty things?

A. CARR: Fall plowing, mostly. Then you had a disk you pulled to work the ground up in the spring.

J. CARR: What did they use to fertilize the ground back then?

A. CARR: Manure from the livestock is about all in them days.

J. CARR: Did they use any of the chemicals or anything like they use today?

A. CARR: No. They used to put the ground in clover and leave it over a year sometimes to build up the soil. You cut one crop of hay off, and then the clover grew up again and you'd plow that under.

J. CARR: I see. Was the quality of the seeds as high then as it is today?

A. CARR: Oh, I don't know. We didn't have high-grade stuff in the corn in those day. We picked our own seed corn out of the field, hung it up to dry.

J. CARR: How did you hang the corn up?

A. CARR: You had the hangers you'd stick the ears on.

J. CARR: Did they have sticks with nails in them, and you stuck the ears on hangers?

A. CARR: There's a lot of them over in the garage. Haven't you seen them over there?

J. CARR: They stuck the ears on the nails and hung them up, huh? When did the livestock, such as the horses for the farm work, start to leave? When did the tractors start to take over?

A. CARR: I can't remember. Quite a while ago now. When the row-crop tractors came in and they could tend the corn with them, then the horses started to lose out.

J. CARR: It started to get where the farmers could do a lot more work then with the tractors?

A. CARR: Sure. It used to take a man for eighty acres. After the tractors come in, one man farmed 160. Now he farms a hell of a lot more than that.

J. CARR: /Laughter/ Yes, I guess they do quite a bit with all these big diesel tractors and all their big machines. In those days, when you went to town, before they had automobiles, how long did it take to make the trip?

A. CARR: Oh, about an hour and a half.

J. CARR: Is that to go to Morris then?

A. CARR: To Morris. And they had what they called feed yards. You'd take your horse in there and pay for, and leave it there until you were

ready to go home.

J. CARR: When you went down to town, you left your horses in the barn in town?

A. CARR: Yes. They called them feed yards.

J. CARR: Did they ever go to Joliet or Chicago by horse and wagon?

A. CARR: To Joliet, but never to Chicago.

J. CARR: Would that have been an overnight trip to go to Joliet?

A. CARR: No. You went up and back the same day. It's only twenty miles.

J. CARR: That took most of the day then, didn't it, to go up there?

A. CARR: It only takes two and a half to three hours to go up and then you had three or four hours in town, and the same to come home.

J. CARR: How did the Depression effect farming?

A. CARR: Damn near went broke.

J. CARR: You mean the prices fell out of the market?

A. CARR: Why, sure. I sold oats for ten cents a bushel one time; corn for twenty-five. That's before we grew beans.

J. CARR: What kind of prices did they get before the Depression?

A. CARR: Oh, fifty cents was a pretty good price for corn.

J. CARR: So the Depression almost cut prices in half or better?

A. CARR: Yes. How much longer do you have to go? I'm getting tired.

J. CARR: Not too much longer. Did they have any trouble with people coming from the cities and stealing the crops?

A. CARR: No.

J. CARR: Do you remember anything about the White Willow Post Office?

A. CARR: Sure, I do. We used to get mail over there.

J. CARR: When did. . . I understand that was part of the store when it originally started, wasn't it?

A. CARR: Well, I guess so. I can't remember when the store started. It would be when I was too young, but I know when Darnells sold to Flatnesses, they took the post office out. I don't know what year that was, either.

J. CARR: Did people have to go to the post office to pick up their mail?

A. CARR: Yes. We went over there to get our mail.

J. CARR: I see.

A. CARR: Then they put a rural route in, and we had our mailbox over on the corner by the store. And just the last few years they had it come to our gate.

J. CARR: About the White Willow Store, do you remember who started it?

A. CARR: Well, I think his name was Darnell.

J. CARR: Darnell.

A. CARR: Lu Darnell, I think, but that's before I came out here.

J. CARR: Do you remember some of the operators, the people who ran the store down through the years?

A. CARR: Well, he (Darnell) sold to A. Washburn, and Washburn sold it to Gunnar Flatness. And as far as the years, I can't tell you; I don't remember what years they were.

J. CARR: And then this Gunnar Flatness, he was . . .

A. CARR: Well, he (Flatness) was -- Mrs. Thompson's dad. When he quit, they took over -- Thompsons.

J. CARR: And they've run the store ever since then?

A. CARR: Up until they closed it.

J. CARR: What kind of goods did they sell over there?

A. CARR: Oh, used to sell some dry goods and groceries -- stuff like that.

J. CARR: Was that more or less just kind of a general store?

A. CARR: Some hardwares and stuff-- general store.

J. CARR: Did they -- were the goods sold by bulk then -- I mean. . .?

A. CARR: Yes, they used to have them (drygoods) in bulk. You'd cut off so many yards you wanted.

J. CARR: Did they have cracker barrels and pickle barrels and things like that?

A. CARR: Well, not too much that I remember. They sold crackers and

pickles, but they weren't in big barrels, I don't think.

J. CARR: Did they have a pot-belly stove over there for the guys to sit around?

J. CARR: Yes. It's the one that's out over here in the garage is the one stove that was over there.

J. CARR: The store was kind of a hangout for the guys around here, wasn't it?

A. CARR: I guess they used to go over there and sit around in the winter-time when they didn't have nothing else to do.

J. CARR: How about the While Willow Blacksmith Shop?

A. CARR: Well, that was over on the corner, first, west of the store, across the road. And they moved it down to where Anderson had a house. He moved down there -- Charlie Anderson.

J. CARR: Was that blacksmith shop pretty important to the community?

A. CARR: Your darn right it was! They could fix wagon wheels and shoe horses, sharpen plow shears and stuff like that, and you had to have it.

J. CARR: And the kids -- did they hang around the blacksmith shop?

A. CARR: Not much. No.

J. CARR: When did the blacksmith start to go out of existence?

A. CARR: I don't know. He bought a place in Minooka and moved his shop to Minooka, but I don't know -- a good many years ago now.

J. CARR: So you had to go to Minooka then for all your blacksmith work after he moved away?

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: Let's talk a little bit about politics around here. Was there any local government, I mean in the White Willow area or anything?

A. CARR: Nothing but some school directors was all.

J. CARR: That's. . .

A. CARR: Three school directors, and one of them was elected every year. (Years ago country school districts had directors. Today those people would be referred to as the school board.)

J. CARR: There was no government, like any representatives or anything around here for White Willow?

A. CARR: No. We had a supervisor for each township, and maybe constable -- I can't remember.

J. CARR: Were most of the people around here -- were they Republicans or Democrats?

A. CARR: I don't know; they didn't tell you what their politics were.

J. CARR: How about you -- were you a . . .?

A. CARR: That's nobody's business what politics I'm at!

J. CARR: Did they have any political organizations around here?

A. CARR: Any what?

J. CARR: Political organizations around here?

A. CARR: No.

J. CARR: What kind of social events, or amusements did they have around here for people?

A. CARR: They didn't have much -- nothing I can think of. Maybe they had a Christmas doings at the school.

J. CARR: Did they have any ball teams or anything like that around here?

A. CARR: No, not close. Lisbon and Plattville used to have a scrub team.

J. CARR: Did you play for any of those teams?

A. CARR: About 25 years -- 20 years or more.

J. CARR: You were a pretty good ball player then, in your time?

A. CARR: I even played over in Channahon.

J. CARR: Where did they play the games at?

A. CARR: Well, they had a ball diamond in Lisbon and one in Plattville -- out in the pasture.

J. CARR: Out in the cow pasture!

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: You had to watch where you were stepping then.

A. CARR: Not too much.

J. CARR: When did electricity start to come around on the farm?

A. CARR: About 1935 -- I can't remember for sure.

J. CARR: That made quite a big difference then?

A. CARR: I'll say it did! We didn't go by meters then. I had to pay so much a month. I had to guarantee that before they put it in, and that way they got you to buy quite a bit of appliances so you would use up the juice.

J. CARR: They had you coming or going then, huh?

A. CARR: Yes.

J. CARR: When did the telephone come in?

A. CARR: Oh, that's longer than I can remember. It's quite a while.

J. CARR: Then they had telephones when you came out here?

A. CARR: No. They didn't have telephones when I came out here. I suppose maybe 1920.

J. CARR: How about indoor plumbing -- when did the people around here start to have running water and things like that?

A. CARR: We got it here in '45.

J. CARR: 1945?

A. CARR: Yes. Some of them had it before that, but we got it here in '45.

J. CARR: '45 then, huh? Okay. Now television and radio -- did they have radio back. . . ?

A. CARR: Oh, we had radio quite a while before television.

J. CARR: Did radio play quite an important part for the families?

A. CARR: Oh, sure! We used to listen to it and had earphones to stick on your head. Then you would divide them up -- give one to the neighbor and he could listen, too.

J. CARR: And television -- what difference did that make when they started to have radio and television?

A. CARR: It didn't make much difference. You had something to look at when you got the television.

J. CARR: That's. . .

A. CARR: I think that was about '45 when I got television, the first one.

J. CARR: So that made quite a bit of a pastime then for the people out here?

A. CARR: They came out with about two stations to start with. You'd get the ball game on W-G-N.

J. CARR: There was no color television then, was there?

A. CARR: No, no. They was lucky if you could get a picture you could make out, on the first ones.

J. CARR: Took quite a while before they got them down where you could . . . ?

A. CARR: You had to have a good antenna to get a good TV picture on it.

You're done now, ain't you?

J. CARR: I think we are just about done. I think we covered everything.

A. CARR: I'm getting petered out!

J. CARR: I just want to say a few more things here about religion, and then I guess we'll wrap it up. How important was religion to the people around here? Were they pretty religious people around here?

J. CARR: Well, the Lutherans were -- that's the Norwegians -- they were more so than the rest of the people, I think.

J. CARR: Then most of the people around here were Lutherans?

A. CARR: No, they weren't. Most of them -- half, any how.

J. CARR: The greatest part of them, huh? Did they have any churches close by out here when you first came out?

A. CARR: They had one over down in Sable Township and Minooka and Lisbon.

J. CARR: So they did have quite a few churches around here then?

A. CARR: They had one over there where the Lutheran church is -- that was a Norwegian church.

J. CARR: Over here a couple of miles east of here where the Plattville Lutheran Church is?

A. CARR: Yes, Plattville had a church.

J. CARR: Do you remember anything called the Doweyites?

A. CARR: I don't know anything about it, no.

J. CARR: You don't remember anything about them at all? Well, I think we just about covered everything, and I thank you for your time, and I appreciate it.

A. CARR: Okay.

J. CARR: Okay. Thank you very much.

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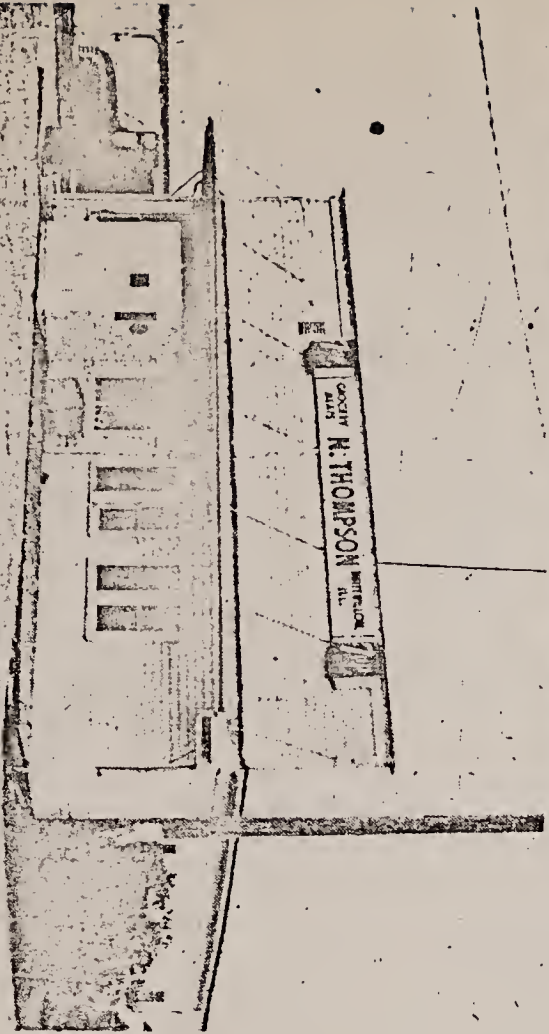
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Country Store Closes After 68 Years Of Service



BY LOIS G. CHURCHILL

Legend, tradition and the end of an era takes place today, Monday, July 31, 1967, as the country store at White Willow, west and north of Minooka, closes its doors, after having been in existence since 1899 - and all of us are sad, yes, very sad!

We have had the pleasure of knowing the proprietors, Winifred and Nelen Thompson, since 1938, when we moved to rural Minooka from Yorkville, and in all

that time, I can never remember Nelen weighing his thumb with the meat, or Winnie ever saying a cross word to anyone - always that nice smile -- and when I sometimes found a few more grocery items than I had on my list, Winnie or Nelen would just say: 'Oh, that's OK, Ralph can pay for them when he comes for the Sunday paper.' And our little grandson, Paul Johnson of Joliet, loved Winnie's pretty flowers, and being accustomed to picking a bouquet of dandelions, violets or whatever was handy, he would

pick a flower or two from Winnie's flower beds everytime we went to the store. Yes, we will all miss the White Willow store!

The White Willow store opened in 1899 and also contained a Post Office. Mr. and Mrs. L. Darnell were the first storekeepers and operated there until 1903. Taking over at that time were Mr. and Mrs. Dell Washburn, who ran the store until 1910. Then, Mr. and Mrs. Gunder Flatness and daughters, Winifred and Lillie took over and the store stayed in the family until today, 57 years later. When Winnie and Lillie were quite small, they occasionally helped their daddy by waiting on customers, and writing down what they sold and the price. When we moved to Minooka, the favorite story about the store, and it was told to us at least a dozen times, was as follows:

'One day, a neighbor named Carl, came to the store to buy some overalls. Winnie's daddy was busy polishing apples, so he said to his daughter: 'Winnie, take down Carl's pants!' Carl started running out of the store, shouting, 'I'll be d-- If she will!'

In 1919, Lillie was married to William Benson, and in 1930, Winifred was married to Nelen Thompson. Mr. and Mrs. Gunder Flatness retired in 1930 and Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, better known as Winnie and Nelen, have operated the store for 37 years, until its closing today. Truly the passing of an era, and we will always have a little nostalgia every time we ride by the

little White Willow store. Best of wishes to you, Winnie and Nelen, and may you have many happy years of retirement!

HISTORY OF THE WHITE WILLOW POST OFFICE

The first post office in the White Willow community was in the home of John Widney on the farm where Blanchard Wix now lives.

Mr. Widney had come from Ohio in 1845 and the post office was given the name "Ohio Farm Post Office."

The mail was brought weekly from Chicago and was distributed from a black walnut cupboard that had been made by Mr. Widney, who was the grandfather of Mrs. Ella Heap. Mrs. Heap, who at the age of 91 years was mentally alert and helped me compile this early history of the post office, passed away on November 3, 1961, having resided in the Salem Home in Joliet the last years of her life.

The post office cupboard mentioned herein is now a highly prized possession of Mrs. Heap's niece, Mrs. Virginia Matteson Lamson of Crown Point, Indiana.

When a change of administration necessitated a change of postmasters, as it did in the early days, the office went from the Widney home to the Jordan home about one mile east of what is now the White Willow corner. It was from the growth of white willow trees at the Jordan place that the name "White Willow" came into being. After the Jordans, the mail was distributed for twenty years in the home of my Grandfather Shufeldt where Lawrence Weeks now lives, then in my childhood home east of the White Willow corner.

During these years two of the mail-carriers were Charley Wyeth, who lived where Harold McHugh now lives, and John Atley, who shared a home with two bachelor brothers in a little house that was on the northwest corner of what is now the Dana Cryder farm. The Atleys were

brothers of Mrs. Darnell, wife of the first White Willow storekeeper and postmaster.

The youngest daughter of Charley Wyeth (mentioned above) is Mrs. Florence Wyeth Hopkins, now a nurse's aide in Copley Hospital, Aurora, Illinois. Florence helped my mother sort the mail when we had the post office in our home.

We moved to Grandfather's home after his death and my early home burned in 1948, being replaced by the small house now occupied by Beryl Bounds, the farm tenant.

In 1899 the White Willow Store with post office included was built, the first proprietor being Lucius Darnell of Charter Grove. Mr. Darnell served as postmaster also. When he left the community in 1903, the A.E. Washburn family of Morris came to run the store and post office. Mr. Washburn continued as postmaster until 1910. Mrs. Washburn, now at the advanced age of 97 years, is mentally alert and with the help of her daughter Marjorie Flatness has given me the information for this part of the White Willow Post Office history.

In 1899, at the time that the White Willow Post Office opened, Rural Free Delivery was established in the Minooka area and Mr. Alex Bell was the first mail carrier for R.F.D.#2. Mr. Bell brought the mail to White Willow in a locked pouch for the farmers who patronized the White Willow Post Office, but delivered mail to the other families on his route.

In 1910, when the Washburns sold the store to Gunnar Flatness, the post office was closed and Mr. Bell delivered mail to all the families on Route #2, Minooka.

Mr. Bell drove a horse and rode in an enclosed vehicle which is now

in the possession of Leo Steffes of Minooka who exhibits it in parades in that area.

Mr. Bell bought his first automobile, a little red "Brush" in 1909 and retired in 1920.

Mr. Bell's daughter Audrey of Minooka gave me the information needed for this portion of the White Willow Post Office history.

Subsequent mail carriers were Allen McCowan, Joe Conners and the present carrier Charles McCowan, a son of Allen McCowan.

Winifred Flatness Thompson gave me the following information:

When Mr. Flatness bought the White Willow Store in 1910, the post office had been closed and Mr. Flatness put the mail receptacle in an outbuilding. Later the mail receptacle was taken across the road to Martin Mathiason, who used it in his shop as a place to store bolts, nails, etc. At that time the names of the post office patrons were still on the boxes.

In 1960 when the Mathiason house was sold and torn down, the post office receptacle was burned with other debris, and the last vestige of the White Willow Post Office was gone.

Written by Mae Shufeldt Naden
in 1962

THE FLATNESS HOUSE

Gunnar Flatness, a ship carpenter by trade, came in 1896 to the United States with the thought in mind to bring his wife and their seven children here from Norway to make a permanent home.

After three years of carpentry in Illinois this plan was carried out, and Mrs. Flatness and the children came to this country. The children were Ida (Mrs. Albert Severson, deceased), Rasmus, Sophia (Mrs. Sam Knudson), Mandius, Hannah (Mrs. Martin Mathiason, deceased), Carrie (Mrs. Ole Dell), and Arnie. Two daughters, Lillie (Mrs. William Benson) and Winifred (Mrs. Nelen Thompson) were born in this country.

All the foreign-born Flatness children quickly learned to understand our language and speak it very well. Although their mother understood it perfectly, she was always hesitant to express herself in English.

The first house in which the Flatness family lived after coming to Illinois was located about 2 miles northeast of White Willow on the Knudson farm where the Saltzman family now lives. The house was old and hard to heat, and that first winter was an unusually cold one. I have been told that hedge fences froze, the weather being so bitterly cold.

When Mrs. Flatness washed the floors, the water would freeze on them, and the members of the family huddled around the stove to eat their meals. "Such a bleak, dreary place to live," thought Mrs. Flatness. "Where is that wonderful America that I heard so much about in Norway?" Mrs. Flatness was homesick for the mild climate, the beautiful mountains and the trees of her native land.

The Flatness family lived in this house for about three years, the daughter Lillie being born there; then they bought a house that was located on the east side of the road south of the White Willow Store and opposite where LeRoy Knudson now lives. The daughter Winifred was born in this house, and when she was a few months old, the house was moved to the N. S. Shufeldt farm on the west side of the road opposite the store. And it became a part of the White Willow Community Center.

My father thought that by having this family of young people on his farm he might expect to have hired help both for farm work and in the house, because in those days most of the Norwegians went out to work at the age of 14 years, as soon as they had been confirmed. Father's expectations were realized as the three Flatness boys worked on our farm and four of the girls helped in our home with the housework.

In 1910 Mr. Flatness gave up the carpenter work by which he had made a living for his family and bought the White Willow Store. Mr. Flatness's two youngest daughters, Lillie and Winifred, helped their father run the business.

The Flattnesses continued to live in their home; but after one robbery had been committed at the store and a second robbery attempted, it was then thought safer to live on the store premises. Then Mr. Flatness remodeled the west part of the building and the family moved there to live.

After the Flattnesses moved to live in the store building, the following families rented the house: Austin Carr, Osman Viland, Tilman Wix, Donald Craig and Osman Olson.

Lillie Flatness married William Bentson in 1920. Winifred Flatness married Nelen Thompson in 1930, and for a short time they lived in the store apartment with Winifred's parents.

Mr. and Mrs. (Gunnar) Flatness then moved back into their house and lived there until their deaths. Mr. Flatness died in 1931 and Mrs. Flatness died in 1938.

In 1939 Hannah Flatness Mathiason and her husband Martin bought the Flatness house and lived there until their deaths. Martin died in 1960, and Hannah died in 1959. In April, 1960, Dan Saltzman bought the house for \$20. He demolished the building, and one of the old landmarks of White Willow was gone. The lot reverted to the Shufeldt farm where Lawrence Weeks and his family now live.

Written by Mae Shufeldt Naden
in 1962

WHITE WILLOW STORE HISTORY

A corporation of which my father Norman S. Shufeldt was a member had the White Willow Store, including a post office, which was built in 1899. That store was about one-half the size of the present building. Other members of the corporation were an uncle John L. Shufeldt another uncle Charles Sherrill and Robert Schofield.

Mr. Lucius Darnell from Charter Grove was the first storekeeper and also served as postmaster. The Darnell family lived about a quarter of a mile east of the store on the north side of the road. Mrs. Darnell was an Atley, an aunt of Mrs. Dorothy Atley Olson, now a teacher in Yorkville.

The Darnells ran the store until 1903, and Mrs. Darnell's brother John Atley brought the mail until Mr. Bell started to carry it in 1899.

The I.V. Cryder family claimed to have had the first "free mail delivery," as they had a box at the end of their lane and John Atley would leave the Cryder mail there when he went past to go to the home that he shared with his brothers Phil and Fred, who were drillers. At the time all three were bachelors, although Fred later married and is the father of Mrs. Dorothy Atley Olson. The Atley brothers lived in a small house on the northwest corner of what is now the Dana Cryder farm.

John Atley was a "Doweyite," a firm believer in the healing power of John Alexander Dowie, a faith-healer who lived in Zion, Illinois, and claimed to be able to cure all manner of diseases and infirmities. John

had one leg that was much shorter than the other, and he wore a metal lift on his shoe. He was sure that if he went to Dowie for a session of faith-healing he would be cured of his infirmity, and he tried to convert (my) father to Doweyism, as the cult was called. Father told John, "If you come home with your short leg as long as the other one, then I will believe in this faith-healing." John's leg remained as it had been, but he said he was not cured because he did not have enough faith.

The store was enlarged while Mrs. Darnell was running it, and the carpenter work was done by Gunnar Flatness who later bought the place.

The Darnell children were: George (a son of Mr. Darnell by a previous marriage), Roy, Ella, and Grace.

Mrs. Darnell played an accordin, not a keyed instrument such as the ones now used, but a "squeeze box", as it was called.

When the Darnells left White Willow in 1903, Mr. A.E. Washburn from Morris came to run the store and post office. The Washburn family lived for a short time in the house vacated by the Darnells, but Mrs. Washburn was afraid to live in the country with her two small children, Homer and Marjorie, so the family moved into three rooms in the west part of the store building where they paid \$7 a month rent.

The Washburns often entertained their young nieces and other Morris girls, and the country boys always came to the store during these visits. In those days the store was a gathering place for "loafers" who came to buy something, but mostly to visit together.

Lulu Carr, one of Mrs. Washburn's nieces, married one of these

country boys, James Schofield, a son of Robert Schofield. Jim and Lulu, as we call them, now live in Elkhorn, Wisconsin.

Mrs. Washburn liked to go fishing. Often she would hitch Charlie, the horse, to the grocery wagon and take the neighborhood children to fish and enjoy a picnic at the Aux Sable Creek, at Dirst's Bridge between White Willow and Minooka. Another thing I remember about Mrs. Washburn was the great number of four-leaf clovers she could find in a short time, and also the delicious chocolate cakes she baked!

In his store business Mr. Washburn took butter "in trade" for groceries -- the butter that the farm wives made in those days. Some of the butter was not good, but it was a "ticklish" situation to tell a woman that her butter was of poor quality. Mr. Washburn said that there were two things that made a woman mad: one was telling her that her butter was bad, and the other that her baby was homely!

Mrs. Washburn is now at the advanced age of 97 years and still mentally alert. She and her daughter Marjorie Flatness have helped me compile this portion of the history of the White Willow Store and Post Office.

The post office was closed in 1910 when the Washburns left White Willow, and Mr. Bell of Minooka delivered mail to all of the families on R.F.D. #2. The Washburns moved to Morris where they lived for a short time before moving to Lisbon, Illinois. In Lisbon they also ran a general store and post office.

In 1910 Gunnar Flatness bought the White Willow Store and ran the business with the help of his two little daughters, Lillie, ten years old,

and Winifred, eight years old. Winifred being just a little girl, liked to run up to the Shufelts to get away from the store business, but soon our telephone would ring with this message from Lillie, "You tell Winnie to come right straight home!"

At one time the store had an ice cream parlor where ice cream, made by Mrs. Flatness, was sold on Saturday nights in the summertime. There also were medicine shows on the store lot for summertime amusement.

Mr. Flatness was a man of great strength; and he bought supplies of salt, flour, etc., which at that time came in barrels. Mr. Flatness could lift a barrel of salt that ordinarily would take two or three men to handle. When he drove his first automobile, and upon getting stuck in the mud on the bad roads of those days, he would get out of the car, lift it out of the rut, and drive on.

The Flatnesses continued to live in their home across the road until one robbery had been committed at the store and a second one attempted. It was then thought safer to live on the store premises, so Mr. Flatness remodeled the west part of the building and the family moved in there to live.

Both Lillie and Winifred continued to help their father in the store until Lillie married William Bentson in 1920. Winifred married Nelen Thompson in 1930 and lived in the store apartment for a short time with her parents. Mr. and Mrs. Flatness then moved back into their house and lived there until their deaths. Mr. Flatness died in 1931, and Mrs. Flatness died in 1938.

Nelen and Winifred Thompson, the present proprietors, bought the store from Winifred's parents and have run it since 1930. They have done extensive remodeling, making their apartment a very comfortable, pleasant place to live in.

Written by Mae Shufeldt Naden
in 1962

A HISTORY OF THE WHITE WILLOW BLACKSMITH SHOP

Harry Minos, a blacksmith, built the shop across from the store on the N.S. Shufeldt farm. Harry moved to Joliet after selling his shop to Charley Gunderson who enlarged the building and used it to house his feed mill.

The need was felt in the community for a blacksmith so Charley put an advertisement in the paper for such a worker, and Charley Anderson (called "Charley Blacksmith" by many of us) answered the ad in person, coming from Lemont to Minooka by train. He had no idea where White Willow was located, so he hitched a ride with Charley Wyeth who had hauled a load of grain to Minooka. It was in the wintertime and Charley "Blacksmith" nearly froze, riding eight miles in an open wagon, dressed in a light coat and derby hat. When he got to White Willow, Charley Gunderson offered to sell his building to Charley "Blacksmith" for \$50 down and a certain amount to be paid each month. All the money Charley "Blacksmith" had was the \$16 he had brought in his pocket.

My father said, "Do you meant to tell me, Charley, that at your age and working all this time, that you have only \$16?"

But father offered to help him make the initial payment, after which Charley took care of his future obligations. This was in 1905. He boarded in the Shufeldt home and was a pleasant, agreeable person to have in our family. He was an avid reader and enjoyed the abundant supply of good reading material available at the Shufeldts.

Charley was a skilled chess player and taught us to play this game. Dana became a good player, and he and Charley spent many winter evenings at the chess board.

As a child I remember Charley ("Blacksmith") making horseshoe nail "rings" for the little folks of the neighborhood who enjoyed watching him at his work in the shop.

This stanza from "The Village Blacksmith" by Longfellow describes the scene exactly:

And children coming home from school
Look in at the open door;
They love to see the flaming forge,
And hear the bellows roar,
And catch the burning sparks that fly
Like chaff from a threshing floor.

The following incident for my little narrative was told to me by Winifred Thompson of the White Willow Store. At the time that Charley "Blacksmith" had his shop, Winifred was a very small child, but she, too, was interested in the work being done there, and she was especially fascinated by the huge cauldron of water that Charley used to cool his red hot horseshoes. Her mother had warned Winifred repeatedly to keep away from that water, but she could not resist leaning over the edge of the cauldron to investigate. One day when all dressed up, she leaned over too far and fell into the water; she was pulled out, scared but unharmed, and had learned her lesson the hard way.

Charley was a good steady workman when he was on the job, but he liked his liquor; and every so often he would go to Lemont on a weekend "spree." One Monday morning when he was not down for breakfast, father said, "I guess Charley didn't come home last night." However, mother had heard him come in, so she asked father to go up to Charley's room where he found him with his shirt covered with blood and with both eyes blackened. Father said, "Charley, you ought to quit your carousing and settle down and get married." Charley replied, "There will be two moons

in the sky before I get married as long as I have this good place to stay!"

Father was told by some of the women in the neighborhood that there was gambling going on in the blacksmith shop and that their husbands were involved, probably "being took" as the slang phrase would express the situation. These women asked father to put a stop to the gambling, but he told them he could do nothing unless they would appear in court and state their case. They were horrified to think of this publicity and would not make a court appearance, so father, tiring of the whole business, ordered the shop moved from his premises.

Charley bought a few acres of land and the buildings on the Charley Wyeth place about three-fourths of a mile east of the White Willow Store, and the shop was moved there. Charley worked part-time in a shop in Minooka besides taking care of the White Willow blacksmith jobs.

The White Willow basketball team managed by Dana Shufeldt practiced upstairs in the shop, members of the team being Austin Carr, Erwin Wix, Blanchard Wix, Somner Knudson, Tom Roswold, Severt Severson and Olai Olson. The team played games in Minooka and Plattville. I am told that at one time in Plattville there was practically a riot as the Plattville fans didn't like the way the game was going.

Meantime, Charley "Blacksmith" had finally decided to "settle down" and had married a nice Lemont girl, and they lived in the old Wyeth house until Charley had a new home built. He and his wife had a family of seven children, several of whom now live in the Minooka area.

When the Anderson children were grown and had left home, and after Charley and his wife Ella had died, the place was sold to the Harold McHughs, who now live there.

P.S. The youngest daughter of Charley Wyeth mentioned herein is Mrs. Florence Wyeth Hopkins, now a nurse's aide in Copley Hospital, aurora. Another daughter Myrtle died young and at the time of her death was the fiancée of my cousin Erwin Hutchinson.

Written by Mae Shufeldt Naden
in 1962

THE WHITE WILLOW SCHOOL

The first school held in what is now the White Willow neighborhood was in a small building near the present site of Al Baker's barn. The school was taught by Margaret Widney, daughter of John Widney who settled in 1845 on the farm where Blanchard Wix now lives. She later became the wife of Jerry Collins. Mr. Collins is remembered by some of the older of us. As John Widney had several children, no doubt the school was started soon after he came here. While attending this school one of the younger Widney boys, John, was bitten by a rattlesnake which were very common at the time. By use of home remedies he recovered without ill effects.

Sometime later a school called the Sherrill School was held in a building several rods west of what is now Dana Cryder's lane. The schoolhouse was on the north side of the road on the farm occupied by Roland Hadaway (and in 1961 by Harold Gjerde). With the help of Mr. Theodore House I have looked over the records in the courthouse in Yorkville but can find nothing about these early schools. My mother, Mary Sherrill and her brother Charles attended this school which became the Porter School in 1859. The deed for the land which became the site of the Porter School was dated February 12, 1859. February 12th was only a date then, not Lincoln's Birthday as we now know it. When Mother first went to school, the teachers "boarded around" as it was called. That is, they boarded for short periods with such families as had children in school since a teacher's cash salary was only about \$10 or \$12 a month.

A schoolhouse was built sometime in the 1850's east of what is now

White Willow. It stood on what is now the Charles Phillips farm on the south side of the road. It stood among the trees, some of which still remain. My father started to attend this school in 1859. However, there is no record that this school ever existed. He told me while in school there he once saw a man putting in wheat in February -- a rather early spring. His first teacher there was Cordelia Carroll, later Mrs. George Widney and mother of Mrs. I.N.R. Beatty of Morris.

Generally a man taught the school in winter so as to be able to keep order among the bigger boys who only attended school during those months. You must remember the boys and girls at that time went to school until they became young men and women. Just to give you an idea of the teachers' troubles, I will relate a few instances. The first winter Father went to school, it was taught by Francis Henry, Henry Burgess's grandfather. While the teacher was hearing a class recite, one of the older boys came to the teacher's desk for help with a problem. Mr. Henry said, "I haven't time now, just wait a few minutes." The boy said, "I guess if some of the big girls wanted to talk to you, you would have plenty of time!" Then there was a real fight until the boy was subdued. Father was a little boy and he was nearly scared out of his wits.

Another time a big boy threatened to whip the teacher after school, and the teacher did not dare to leave the schoolhouse until a neighbor came to help him! The teacher was not Mr. Henry in this case. So much for that.

I will give the names of some of the teachers who came later: Emogene Gaylord; Richard C. Jordan; Helen Morse; Reverend John Scott, who, while a college graduate, was a poor teacher. For example, Father told of asking Reverend Scott for help when confused by a problem in

arithmetic. Mr. Scott looked at it and said, "Very simple, very simple," certainly no answer to a puzzled boy. It surely takes more than book learning to make a real teacher.

After Mr. Scott, came Hattie Jordan, Clara Pomeroy and Mary Foster. In 1867 the district, which was large, was divided; and the part east of the township line was made into the Martin District. As it was the smaller, that district got the schoolhouse which was moved on the snow to the second four corners east of its original site. Part of the same building is now owned by Harold McHugh. As there was difficulty in finding a site for the new schoolhouse, Joe Widney, Austin Carr's grandfather and Will J. Jordan bought one acre of land from Chauncey Harford. This is in the s.w. corner of the w.1/2 of s.w. 1/4 of Section 25 and was presented by Mr. Widney and Mr. Jordan to the district as long as it is used for school purposes.

The new schoolhouse was built by Daniel Boyer, who lived where Ivan Mortimer lives now. The school was built in 1867. While workmen were doing some repair work nearly sixty years later, they found above the ceiling in the attic a board on which the following inscription was cut: This schoolhouse was built in the year 1867 by D. Boyer, L. Harford, N. Shufeldt, 1867, A.F. Sergeant, D.F. Clark. All but D. Boyer were boys. L. Harford was Lewis Harford, son of Chauncey Harford, who lived where Al Baker lives presently. N. Shufeldt was my father and lived where I live now. A.F. Sergeant, called Dolph by all, lived on the west 80 of the farm now owned by Martin Edmundson; the house, now gone, was near the n.w. corner of the 80 acres. C.F. Clark, called Frank, was a son of Cyrus Clark, who lived where the residence of Newt Peterson is located. This board is now over the door of the school room.

In the first term in the new schoolhouse Kate Gill was teacher. She was followed by Elsie Hare, an aunt of Roy Hare; her home was where Charles Walker lives at the intersection of highways 52 and 47. Other teachers were Phineas Kilmer; Ada Long, whose home was where Irving Hauge now lives; Reverend John H. Kent of Lisbon; also Maria Sergeant; Richard Harvey; Kate Van Dorsen; Mary Deverlaux; Annie Kent, who later was my aunt; Mr. John L. Shufeldt; Lizzie Beattie; George Livingstone; Mary Gruet; Emma Kent; Kate Dwyer, a sister of Henry Dwyer, a man who many of us know; Mamie Pierce of Morris, a cousin of my mother; Hattie Pierce, also of Morris, but no relative of the former.

Others are Katie McLean, who was my first teacher in 1895; Ollie Thayer; Tillie Hollering (Mrs. Will Holt); Rosalie Anderson of Chicago; May Bell (Mrs. John Holt); Sadie McNeil (Mrs. Hale Speed of Blue Earth, Minnesota); Edna Bell; Lulu Templeton; Nellie Bushnell, who was my last teacher; and Clara Bothamley (Mrs. Mandius Flatness).

The above was written by Dana Shufeldt
in 1949.

Later teachers than Dana has recorded include Miss Katherine Hoy (Mrs. Austin Carr); Miss Margaret Hjenwick (Mrs. Milford /Muff/ Wix); Miss Elizabeth Johnson; Miss Agnes Anderson; Mrs. Lola Rushton; Miss Ruth Beane; Miss Ruth Morrison; Miss Sadie Udstien; Mrs. Van Deveer, wife of Kendall County Superintendent of Schools; Miss Marie Larson; Miss Marian Christian; Miss Evelyn Olson; Miss Mabel Thompson; Mrs. Arthur Anderson; Mrs. Ray Hextell; and Mrs. John Jones.

Mrs. John Jones was the last teacher of the White Willow School. It was closed in 1951 and the children were taken by bus to the Plattville Consolidated School.

The Wallins bought the White Willow School building and converted it into a pleasant home where Mrs. Jeanette Gabrielson and her son Ralph now live.

The first meeting of the "Progressive Literary Society" is recorded in the secretary's book as having been held in the White Willow Schoolhouse on November 10, 1887. Thereafter the meetings were held alternately in the White Willow Schoolhouse and the Brown Schoolhouse in Aux Sable.

A "Singing School" conducted by my father Norman Shufeldt was held during these years. From this "Singing School" the White Willow male quartet developed and furnished music for many programs in the surrounding area. Members of this quartet were my brother William Shufeldt, my cousin DeWitt Shufeldt, another cousin Erwin Hutchinson and William Rushton.

The last meeting of the Literary Society recorded in the secretary's book was dated November 3, 1892.

Much later the White Willow Band met for rehearsal in the schoolhouse. Some of the band members were Craig Carr, Mandius Flatness, Dana Shufeldt, James Scofield, Johnny Peterson, and Bert Bentson.

The board mentioned in Dana's history, which had the inscribed names upon it of those who built the White Willow Schoolhouse, was taken down when the schoolhouse was sold and is now in the possession of William Rushton.

At such times, as there was no one to play the piano accompaniment for the White Willow School children to sing, Mother played for them; and they came to the Shufeldt home to practice. As long as Mother was able, she attended all the school programs.

I remember especially the thoughtfulness of Mrs. John Jones who brought the school children to sing for Mother when she was no longer able to go to their school programs.

(The last part of this history of the White Willow School was written by Mae Shufeldt Naden in 1962.)

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